



## **HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE**

### **Statement of Subcommittee Chairman John Katko (R-NY)**

#### **Joint Hearing: Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, & Communication**

*“Securing Our Surface Transportation Systems: Examining the Department of Homeland Security’s Role in Surface Transportation Technologies”*

January 30, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

The Subcommittee on Transportation and Protective Security and the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications are meeting today to examine the degree to which the Department of Homeland Security leverages its research and development expertise to improve the security architecture of our Nation’s surface transportation systems. Specifically, the Subcommittees will examine how the Transportation Security Administration and the Science and Technology Directorate collaborate to improve security capabilities and address identified needs.

The free movement of goods and people depends on the security of our transportation networks. A substantial number of Americans utilize surface transportation on a daily basis, including over 10 billion riders annually on 6,800 U.S. mass transit systems.

While TSA is responsible for securing all of America’s transportation systems, its approaches to aviation security and surface transportation security are markedly different. Whereas TSA is directly involved in security operations at airports, the Agency provides oversight and assistance to surface transportation modes through partnerships with operators, as well as state and local authorities. This collaborative “whole of community” approach helps to ensure that resources are applied efficiently and have the highest efficacy in reducing risk to the Nation’s transportation systems. We know that DHS provides support through security threat assessments, explosives detection canines, and security grants; however our Subcommittees hope to learn more today of how S&T and TSA are helping to drive security technology innovation for the surface sector. This Committee understands that this is a complex undertaking, and I hope we can help you with this critically important responsibility.

The current threat environment facing surface transportation is persistent. The 2015 bombing of a railway station in Turkey, the 2016 metro bombing in Belgium, and the 2017 metro bombing in Russia demonstrate that terrorists continue to see surface transportation modes as soft targets which can yield high numbers of casualties. The attempted suicide bombing in the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City last month followed a recent vehicle ramming attack in Manhattan that killed eight people. As the representative of New York’s 24th District, I recognize the

importance of securing commuter buses, transit agencies, freight rail and all modes of surface transportation. That is why I am so pleased to be working together with my fellow New Yorker, Chairman Donovan, as well as Ranking Members Watson Coleman and Payne, whose New Jersey transportation systems are so closely linked to those in our home state of New York.

This hearing continues the Committee's efforts to understand the challenges facing the diverse spectrum of surface transportation modes, as well as the bureaucratic hurdles that stymie the development of security technology. Previously, we heard from transit police and law enforcement personnel, surface transportation operators, and industry stakeholders. Their insights have helped us identify obstacles that contribute to an impractical development timeline.

Security regulations, inspections, VIPR teams, and grants are only parts of the conversations we should be having on how to secure surface transportation. These initiatives must be supplemented by the deployment of innovative security technologies to effectively reduce risk. Based on your experiences and your expertise, I want to know what you all envision as an appropriate balance of security initiatives and technology in the surface transportation environment. More importantly, I want to know how DHS can lead the way to achieve this balance.

In recent testimony, TSA Administrator Pekoske said, "Although we have invested significant resources and implemented numerous programs and policies to reduce identified vulnerabilities and minimize potential consequences, in the current climate, vigilance and preparation can only take us so far." While I do believe that vigilance is a critical part of threat mitigation, I also agree with the Administrator that TSA must look beyond existing efforts. We need the effective innovation of security technologies to remain proactive against evolving threats.

Today, I would like to discuss how we can expand upon DHS and TSA's efforts to ensure that stakeholders have the tools they need to properly secure surface transportation modes. Specifically, how can TSA and S&T better coordinate with each other and with surface transportation stakeholders to streamline the development and deployment of critical security technologies in surface transportation systems?

Ms. Proctor, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Roberts, and Mr. Jenkins, thank you for appearing before us today to testify about this timely and important issue. We look forward to hearing your testimony.

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